

Ford Site Planning Task Force
February 20, 2007
UAW-Ford-MNSCU Training Center

Meeting #2 – Summary

Ford Site Planning Task Force members present: Carole Faricy, Co-Chair, William Klein, Co-Chair, Peter Armstrong, Shawn Bartsh, James Bricher, Richard Broderick, Ronnie Brooks, Anthony Desnick, David Drach, Terri Dooher Fleming, Charles Hathaway, Deborah Karasov, Angela Kline, Scott Malcolm, Gary Marx, Dennis Rosemark, Matthew Schuerger, Stuart Simek, Morgan Tamsky, Bruce Valen, Stephanie Warne, Ellen Watters, Pamela Wheelock, Dave Sellergren; **Absent:** Lance Neckar

City Staff, others agency reps or consultants present: Cecile Bedor (PED), Merritt Clapp-Smith (PED), Luis Pereira (PED), Nancy Homans (Mayor's office), Ward 3 Councilmember Pat Harris, John Marshall (Ward 3), Bob Close and Bruce Jacobson (Close Landscape Architects), Tom Lincoln (URS), Monte Hilleman (Port Authority), Gayle Summers (Highland District Council), Anne Carroll (Capstone), Tamara Downs Schwei (Capstone), Tim Dykstal (Capstone), Michael Kisch (Capstone)

Others Attending (from meeting sign in sheet): Jennifer Kent (Lunds), Jane McClure (Villager), Tim Nelson (Pioneer Press), Mark Harstad (Chamber of Commerce), Todd McIntyre, Joel Clemmer, Dave Pinto, Deb Kaasa

Meeting called to order by co-chair Bill Klein at 6:31 PM. Klein moved approval of the 2/5/07 Task Force (T.F.) meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Klein stated that while T.F. meetings would be open to public attendance, as a matter of policy, discussions at T.F. meetings would be limited to T.F. members, consultants, City staff, and invited guests. Public input and comment is invited at the large public meetings to occur in March, May, and June (date, time, and place to be announced at the Ford Site Planning website <http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/ped/fordsite/index.html>) and by emailing fordsiteplanning@ci.stpaul.mn.us. The chair also called attention to T.F. member roles, and the T.F. charge, and summarized Phase One and Phase Two of the Ford Site Planning Process. T.F. members raised no questions about these items.

Ford Process Spring Schedule

Ford Site Planning Project Manager, Merritt Clapp-Smith, reviewed the T.F. meeting schedule, including three large public meetings planned for March, May and June. The consultants propose that these public meetings be held on Tuesday evenings, a day following regularly scheduled T.F. meetings. Therefore, the first large public meeting is proposed for the evening of Tuesday March 20th, following the fourth T.F. meeting on Monday, March 19th. Clapp-Smith noted that in addition to the T.F. and public meetings, the consultant team plans to conduct 2 meetings with a developer panel, to get a market-based perspective on the alternative development scenarios. The consultants will also conduct a series of stakeholder meetings.

T.F. members provided feedback on the proposed public meetings and schedule, which included:

- Do a public meeting during the day for better attendance by local businesspeople
- Do a meeting on a non-Monday to mix it up
- Do a meeting on the same afternoon/night as a regular T.F. meeting
- Videotape the meetings for review by T.F. members (and public) that couldn't attend. Anne Carroll, Capstone instructor, indicated that the student group was working on this, with the recorded meetings to be broadcast on SPNN.
- Reschedule the early April T.F. meeting, instead of canceling it

Co-Chair Klein requested that T.F. members email public participation ideas to PED staff, and Clapp-Smith stated she would send out an email to the T.F. specifically requesting T.F. member availability for a first public meeting on Tuesday, March 20th.

Mark Harstad, Director of Economic Development for the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, announced that a separate Chamber-led group would be doing an analysis of the Ford site for local market potential, and would seek to give such input to the Ford Site Planning T.F. The first meeting of the Chamber group would be February 28.

Ford Site History

Clapp-Smith gave a short presentation on the general history and background of the Ford site. Cheap hydropower was the key reason Henry Ford built the plant in St. Paul, and in 1923, he secured the federal license to operate the hydro plant. The plant began producing electricity in 1924, and today generates 18 megawatts of electricity (the plant uses roughly 13 MW). Cars were first produced in 1925, transported out on rail and by barge in the early years. The Ford site has been identified as a site of potential historical significance, due in part to the original assembly building designed by Albert Kahn. [City historic preservation staff are talking with the State Historic Preservation office about doing an official site evaluation that would determine the site's eligibility for historical designation, before the T.F. concludes its planning work. City staff will keep the T.F. updated on the status of the historic preservation implications for this site]. From the late 1920s to 1959, Ford created and used tunnels under the plant that connected with the river, some used to mine silica sandstone for glass production, and others used for moving equipment and products from the plant to the river. During World War II, Ford temporarily retooled the plant for military production. Since its inception, 7 million vehicles have been built at the Ford plant.

Zoning and Overlay Regulations – more background information

Luis Pereira, project planner, next presented the Ford site's current industrial zoning, and referred to a handout and maps that illustrate how the City's draft Mississippi River critical area regulations and the Mpls.-St. Paul Airport Zoning regulations could affect the site, including regulations governing maximum building heights, land uses, and development on/near steep slopes or bluffs. The T.F. then discussed the following related issues:

- It was clarified that Mississippi River Boulevard is the [proposed] approximate dividing line between CA2 & CA3 critical area zoning designations.
- The issue/question of whether the City critical area review would show some deference to the work of the Ford Site Planning T.F. For instance, should the T.F. request that when City staff brings the draft critical area regulations to the Planning Commission and City Council, anticipated for review in May 2007, the City officials keep the Ford site exempt from regulations until the Ford Site Planning T.F. finishes its discussions and makes its recommendations on zoning and land use. City staff will look into what might occur if the Ford Site Planning T.F. makes an official request to put the site "on hold from critical area restrictions" until the T.F. can make a recommendation.
- Deborah Karasov, T.F. member and also member of the Critical Area Task Force, said that the industrial exception for the Ford site is adequate to allow the Ford T.F. to consider a wide range of options for the site, but that guidelines for development outlined in the Critical Area ordinance are still needed.
- The T.F. should consider the river property owned by Ford west of Mississippi River Blvd as a part of the planning process. The property, just under 16 acres, surrounds (but does not include) the hydro plant, and contains a steam plant and waste water treatment plant.
- Some T.F. members stated that applying zoning restrictions to the site, such as Critical Area, was premature until the T.F. planning process is complete.
- Ford representative Dave Sellergren said that the Met Council & DNR are big players, and as they must comment on and approve the City's proposed Critical Area regulations (respectively), the T.F. ought to think about which regulations it has leeway with, and which ones it does not. He

encouraged the T.F. not to be constrained by the current zoning, as the T.F. & City could encourage the development of a Planned Development (§66.800 of the Zoning Code). City staff confirmed this as a possibility.

- Staff asserted that the MSP Airport Zoning is fixed, but the draft Critical Area regulations are in flux, and the base zoning (I1) can change and likely will in response to the task force's work.
- The City weblink to the Zoning code is <http://www.stpaul.gov/code/> (see chapter 60 of the City's Legislative Code).
- It was clarified that the City has the authority to decide the future zoning of the site, while Ford, as the property owner, has the authority to decide when and who to sell the property to.

Stakeholder List – Additions

Clapp-Smith and consultant Bob Close recognized Capstone teacher, Anne Carroll, and the students at the meeting, who had prepared a detailed Ford project “Stakeholder List”, which was handed out at the meeting. Anne Carroll asked the T.F. members for comments on or additions to the list. T.F. members responded that the list needed to include:

- Future employees at the Ford site
- Other union reps (AFL-CIO, Labor Tracks)
- St. Paul taxpayers
- Nearby property owners (higher land values driven by site changes)
- Residents living on corridors most impacted by traffic (Cleveland, Mississippi River Blvd)
- Highland Groveland Rec. Assoc.(future or lost recreational options)
- Youth/rec. organizations' field needs
- St. Paul Bicycle Advisory Board
- Input from indigenous organizations and other cultural/archaeological resources

Co-chair Klein requested that the T.F. email the rest of their input on the draft stakeholder list to Merritt.

The T.F. requested information on the demographic profile of Ford workers. UAW member Lynn Hinkle said that about 450 workers remain today. Another audience member stated that pre-Ford buyouts, about 15-20% Ford employees lived in St. Paul. A current temporary Ford employee in the audience indicated that she lived nearby, and stated others live nearby as well.

Issues Identification – Follow up from T. F. Meeting #1

Consultant Bob Close introduced a breakout session to explore with T.F. members (in groups of about 5) some of the different site aspects/issues, including Natural Resources, Stormwater, Urban Forest, Public Amenities & linkages, Adjacencies (other development patterns around the site), Access & connections, Views & vistas, and Built form. The goal of this exercise was not simply to list the issues, but to flesh them out in greater detail. Related to Natural Resources, the 5 T.F. sub-groups listed connections (views and greenspace); remediation of the site and how the types of pollution will help determine (limit) future uses; opportunities for sustainability on the site; and access of the new development to the green energy of the river (hydro plant). The remaining issues that were not discussed due to time constraints will be organized by the consultants and Capstone students and sent to the T.F.

At the end of the meeting, some T.F. members requested that the T.F. be set up in a tighter circle (“U” formation) at future meetings to facilitate discussion and group dynamics. One member requested that the consultants bring examples of other large brownfield redevelopments, both domestic and international, and another asked for maps showing the Ford parcel overlaid on other known geographic areas to get a better sense of its size.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.